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ABSTRACT

The television component of each of the four courses offered to date by the Universtiy of Mid-America and the State University of Nebraska is by design an important instructional element of the course. Enrollees in the courses were surveyed for their opinions. Generally the course television components have been considered to be both helpful and enjoyable, although there have been considerable variations across courses. The perceived helpfulness of the television programs, as well as their enjoyment, seem to depend on the degree to which the medium is used to present content clearly pertinent to the instructional objectives of the course. Independent of how helpful or enjoyable the television programs are felt to be, they apparently do serve as an effective course pacing device for most learners. (Author/MSE)

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LEARNER RESPONSES TO THE USE OF TELEVISION IN UMA COURSES

Executive Summary No. 8

Office of
Research and Evaluation

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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August, 1975

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This paper has been prepared as a summary of work on this topic. For elaboration of the work summarized herein, the reader is urged to consult Working Paper No. 8. Working papers may be obtained by writing the Office of Public Affairs and Information Services, P. O. Box 82006, Lincoln, NE 68501.

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LEARNER RESPONSES
TO THE USE OF TELEVISION
IN UMA COURSES

Introduction

The University of Mid-America (UMA)[1] is a four-state consortium established to develop multi-media educational courses for adult learners within an open learning nontraditional setting. UMA, as a regional enterprise, grew out of an original one state entity, the State University of Nebraska (SUN) Project, an arm of the University of Nebraska System closely aligned with the Nebraska Educational Television Network.

UMA is committed to utilizing educational television in its courseware in addition to the use of other media. ETV provides relatively easy access to postsecondary educational experiences for a large number of adults; has the potential for providing a diversity of instructional approaches; and is a relatively low cost course component for learners, in spite of relatively high production costs.

The effectiveness of UMA rests in large measure on the degree to which UMA courses are judged effective. For this reason, the UMA Office of Research and Evaluation has been charged with obtaining, analyzing and reporting data relating to the effectiveness of the several media employed in UMA courses to date.

This Executive Summary, and the Working Paper it represents, are the first steps in what will be a series of investigations into the uses of media in UMA courses. At the request of its principal funding agency, the Office of Research and Evaluation has focused upon the uses of television in the first UMA courses.

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[1]The principal funding agency providing support for UMA is the National Institute of Education, under the supervision of its Open Learning Branch.

Television has several distinctive features in relation to other media used in UMA courseware:

* Greater potential for stimulating positive interest and support for UMA by various viewing audiences.
* Expensive in terms of production costs.
* When used in a broadcast mode, a possible factor in limiting study schedule flexibility.
* More susceptible to critical response by viewers.

For these reasons, it seems logical that UMA's study of the various media employed in courses should begin with an assessment of television usage. An assessment of the effectiveness of the television components in UMA courses would, in its most complete form, include at least the following elements: 1) learner responses; 2) responses by audiences other than enrolled learners; 3) determination of the effective roles or functions of television; and 4) cost-effectiveness.

The intent of this paper is to deal with the first of the elements described above. In the sections below, learner television response data from each of the four UMA courses offered to date is described, and certain preliminary conclusions outlined regarding the effectiveness of television components in UMA courses. Suggestions are made concerning some research questions that ought to be addressed in order to inform future decision making regarding the use of television in UMA courses.

It is important to caution against too stringent interpretation of the data. UMA course delivery experience thus far has been limited, and the data reported here might best be thought of as suggestive, not prescriptive. This paper does not represent an evaluation of any course, but rather a look, from the learner's perspective, at one kind of component.

Description of UMA Courses

Only one of the four courses offered to date by UMA and SUN--Accounting I--includes a television component produced entirely by UMA. The television programs of a second course--Introductory Psychology--include some portions produced by UMA. The other two courses include television components produced entirely by other entities. The four UMA courses are described below.

1. Accounting I

This course, produced entirely by UMA, corresponds to one half of a college-level first year accounting course, and is approved for academic credit by the Accounting Department of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). In addition to television, Accounting I includes a textbook, study guide, audio tapes and a weekly newspaper overview of each lesson.

Accounting I consists of a number of topics, with each topic corresponding generally to a lesson of instruction. There are fifteen, 30-minute television programs, with each program generally relating to a single topic. During the first two offerings of the course, each television program was broadcast over the statewide ETV network in Nebraska twice during a particular week. Video cassettes for all programs were available to learners at four SUN learning centers located in different population centers across the state.

The television broadcast schedule for the first offering of Accounting I began October 1, 1974, and ended February 1, 1975. Enrollees were given until April 30, 1975, to complete the course. Of the more than 400 persons enrolled, 273 learners enrolled for academic credit. To date, 123 (45%) of those originally enrolling for credit have satisfactorily completed all requirements for course credit. Less than 3% have scored too low on course examinations to receive academic credit.

The second offering of Accounting I began March 1, 1975, under conditions virtually the same as for the first offering. A week for review was, however, provided in the broadcast television schedule immediately prior to stated exam dates. In the second offering of Accounting I, 126 are enrolled; 107 for credit.

2. Introductory Psychology

Introductory Psychology was an extant course that was acquired by UMA and extensively adapted. The course was produced by Communications Research Machines, Inc. (CRM). The UMA adaptation of the course utilized the CRM textbook, a study guide developed by UMA from CRM materials, a weekly newspaper lesson overview, a set of recommended readings, and fifteen, 30-minute television programs. The television programs include extensive portions of a number of the CRM course and other films to which original UMA production material was added.

Introductory Psychology is a college level course for which credit is offered by the Psychology Department at UNL. The television broadcast schedule for the first offering of Introductory Psychology began November 4, 1974, and concluded on March 1, 1975. Enrollees were given until May 31, 1975, to complete course requirements.

Enrollment in the first offering of Introductory Psychology was 265, with 220 enrolled for credit. To date, 117 (53%) have satisfactorily completed the course. Less than 3% of those completing the course have scored too low to be granted academic credit.

The second offering of the course began March 4, 1975. As with Accounting I, a review week was included in the broadcast schedule immediately preceding the times set aside for the five course exams. Ninety persons enrolled for this second offering of Introductory Psychology, with 81 enrolled for credit.

3. Consumer Experience

Consumer Experience is a course dealing with many common consumer problems. The course was produced by faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. It was acquired by UMA and offered virtually as acquired.

The course consists of thirty, half-hour television programs, two texts, a student learning guide, and a UMA-developed newspaper lesson overview. Two different television programs are aired over the ETV network twice each week.

The television broadcast schedule for the first offering of Consumer Experience began on March 4, 1975. Seventy-five (75) persons are enrolled in the course, with 62 enrolled for credit. Academic credit is offered by the Department of Education and Family Resources at UNL.

4. Making It Count

The fourth course offered by UMA is Making It Count, an introductory course in computer history and technology produced by the Boeing Corporation and acquired by UMA.

Making It Count consists of twenty, half-hour television programs supplemented by a student manual, a textbook, and newspaper lesson overviews developed by UMA. Two of the television programs are broadcast during a given week.

The first offering of Making It Count began March 3, 1975. Fifty-eight (58) learners out of a total of 71 enrollees are enrolled for credit. Credit for Making It Count is offered by the Computer Science Department at UNL.

General Description of the Role of Television in UMA Courses

Television is an important medium in each of the four UMA courses offered to date, but marked differences exist among the course television components. These differences relate to such things as the role assigned television in

course development, the relationship of television to other components, the relative content load carried by the television, the general style of presentation employed, and talents used.

If UMA acquires a course, it has little control--except through the course acquisition process--over the characteristics of that television component. Where UMA develops a course television component wholly or in part, it can, of course, determine what the characteristics of that component will be. It is important, therefore, to know what cirteria are employed in the development of UMA course television components, and how those criteria were themselves developed.

During the early days of SUN, several fundamental (though generally informal) judgments were made regarding the role television would play in UMA courses.

* Courses developed by UMA would be multi-media in nature, with each medium utilized to fulfill its most suitable role. No one medium would carry the entire cognitive load in any course.

* Television was to be a principal--rather than an adjunct--instructional medium. ETV was accessible to a large majority of residents in the region and televised instruction was seen as perhaps the most transportable media available.

* A key characteristic of television in a UMA course would be "high quality" as determined through comparison of UMA television production elements (e.g., caliber of production personnel, quality of sets, etc.) with similar elements in high quality commercial or public television programs.

* Because prior instructional television research indicated that televised lectures are not particularly effective, a different approach to televised instruction with UMA courseware was to be used. UMA was influenced considerably here by the overall experience of the Children's Television Workshop, which developed Sesame Street and Electric Company for children, and--more recently--Feeling Good, an adult health series. In brief, the television component of each course should be produced to engender a strong and positive visual appeal in learners as well as to assist in content learning. Vignettes, story lines, animation, and similar techniques were seen as potentially effective formats for achieving these ends.

Differences along a variety of dimensions exist among the television components of the four courses offered to date by UMA. The prominent characteristics of these television components will be described in the following sections of this paper. There is, however, one broad characteristic that should be mentioned here: The degree to which the television is oriented toward content learning as opposed to a more affective orientation.

The characteristic differences among television components in courses offered by UMA can be thought of with respect to a cognition-affect continuum. The television components of some UMA courses are focused to a considerable extent on the direct impartation of content knowledge and understanding, with less apparent attention paid to the learner appeal aspects of the presentation.

With respect to other courses, however, the television has been developed so as to fulfill a more affect-related role. These "other courses" are those for which the television component has been produced wholly or in part by UMA. The UMA-produced television components are primarily concerned, of course, with the task of aiding enrollees' learning of course content, but a significant effort has been made to affect positively the maintenance of learner's interest, study motivation and all-around course enjoyment.

Formative Evaluation of UMA Courses

The following general procedures have been established for the evaluation of UMA-produced courseware. The first two offerings of the course constitute the course field test period. Achievement and appeal data gathered during this period will inform those responsible for course revision.

Data gathered during the first offering of a course are, by design, to be comprehensive in nature. They will include responses to media employed and content covered. Data gathered during the second offering are to be of a more

focused nature, providing detailed responses relating to specific problematical areas identified during the first offering.

The Role of Television and Learner Response Data Within Each UMA Course

Course evaluation data have been gathered in a variety of ways from each of the four courses offered by UMA. Included among these data are various forms of learner responses to the television presentations within each course. These responses will be presented and discussed below, course by course.

The intended role of the television component in each course will be described below. Data relating to learner responses to television within the course will then be presented, followed by an overall discussion of the data and their interpretation.

1. Accounting I

The role of television in Accounting I

A number of things attest to the importance of the role of television in Accounting I. The executive producer and script writer hired by UMA were persons of considerable national prominence. The professional talent included a well-known host personality, another well-known actor as a principal character, and a repertory group of experienced professional actors.

The principal role of television in Accounting I, as conceived by the course developers, was as follows: The television programs were designed to provide the learner with visualized examples of the application of some key concepts in the lesson. Where key concepts in the lesson were abstract or vague, it was intended that the concepts would be clarified through one or more of a variety of visualization techniques.

The decision to assign the role indicated to the television component was based in no small measure on research conducted by SUN in the very early formative stage of the course.[2] The summary statement of this research was that "vignettes and story lines can hold the interest of a varied audience with different motivational backgrounds if there is a proper integration of 'entertainment' and instruction (p. 59)."

In addition, those responsible for the development of instruction in Accounting I concluded that the appropriate role for television in the course was in terms of middle levels of cognitive learning by students. That is, the television component was developed to deal not so much with the "what?" of the key concepts of accounting (i.e., rote knowledge) but rather the "why?" and the "how?" (i.e., understanding and application).

A secondary--but nonetheless important--role assigned to the television component in Accounting I has a decidedly affective purpose. The television programs, it was intended, would reveal the accountant in today's world to be an up-to-date professional having diversified talents and a sense of humor.

The general format of the television programs in Accounting I was as follows: The host served as overall master-of-ceremonies and provided continuity across the programs. A second characterization throughout the course was that of an "authority figure." Members of the repertory group were assigned roles in vignettes, dialogues, and occasional musical presentations. Each 30-minute program covered several key concepts from the content material for one topic in the course. This content, often following a brief review of earlier content, was generally introduced by the host. Selected key concepts of the content

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[2] Brown, Robert D. et al., "Evaluation of a Variety of Television Lesson Formats for Potential Adult Learners in an Open Learning System." Educational Technology, Vol. 14, No. 8, August, 1974, pp. 55-59.

were then illustrated or otherwise presented in one of a variety of forms by members of the repertory group.

Each production technique was selected to fulfill a specific instructional task. A wide variety of visuals symbolizing content elements were used. The programs usually concluded with the host reviewing major points, assisted by other talents. It was anticipated that the television programs would be both enjoyable and instructionally enlightening.

Learner Responses to Television in Accounting I (first offering)

During the first offering of Accounting I, learner responses to television data were obtained from a variety of sources. Responses from each of these sources will be examined in the sections to follow.

Unit evaluation forms. Accounting I consists of six units of material, Units A through F, excluding an introductory lesson. Unit A covers five topics, Units B through D each have two, Unit E has one topic and Unit F, three. Enrollees were provided with forms for evaluating each unit. Instructions were given for the completion of this form, and a postage-free return envelope was provided with each form.

Nearly 600 forms were returned over all units. An average of approximately 24% of enrolled students submitted forms on particular units, ranging from a 55% return of the first form to a 10% return of the last.

Only one question on the unit evaluation form related directly to television. The learner was asked to indicate the degree of helpfulness of each of the instructional aids or resources in the course. Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents indicated that the television was "Very Helpful"; 52% reported it "Helpful"; 22% said "Not Helpful"; and 8% indicated the television was not used.

In addition, the unit form included an open-ended question which permitted responses regarding television. Overall, 46% made comments about the course, 12% of the respondents included negative comments about the television while 2% offered positive comments. The most frequent criticisms of the television programs were that: 1) the shows were too juvenile (too much like Sesame Street); 2) they were oriented excessively toward entertaining, rather than instructing; and 3) there were too many distracting elements such as the singing and dancing sequences.

End-of-course evaluation forms. When an Accounting I enrollee completed the final exam in the course, he or she was sent a two-part, end-of-course evaluation instrument to complete and return in an ecnlosed postage-free envelope.

The first part of this instrument is a general form used with each UMA course, and the second part is a supplementary form designed specifically for Accounting I learners. As of May 31, 1975, 121 persons had completed the first offering of Accounting I. Eighty (80) of these learners, or approximately 66% of the course completers, returned the end-of-course evaluation forms.

On the end-of-course 'general' form, two questions concern learner responses to television. The first asks the learner to list in order of importance in his study, all the instructional aids used in the course. Eight positions for ranking the aids are provided and first offering Accounting I learners utilized an average of five positions. Overall, television ranked fifth.

The second question was an open-ended query asking for specific recommendations from the learner for improving the course. Seventeen (21%) of the 80 who submitted end-of-course forms recommended directly or indirectly that the television component be changed.

The supplementary form submitted by those completing Accounting I includes one objective two-part item relating directly to learner responses to television. This item asks the learner to rate the five learning aids employed in Accounting I according to: 1) the degree to which each was "enjoyable" for the learner; and 2) the importance of each to the learner in the course. In terms of the former, 31% reported receiving considerable enjoyment, 13% had neutral views, and 54% indicated they received relatively little enjoyment. With respect to importance, 21% rated the television as relatively important, 19% were neutral, and 56% considered the television as relatively unimportant.

Two things are to be noted here: 1) Television, a component deliberately produced to be enjoyable, was enjoyed less by respondents than any of the other four components; and 2) the importance rating of television was considerably lower than its enjoyment rating whereas for every component but one (the newspaper) the rating of importance showed a clear increase over that of enjoyment.

A second question on the supplementary form provided some indirect data relating to learner responses to television. Enrollees were asked to indicate the usual sequence followed in the study of each lesson. The direct responses are not of concern here, but what is of interest is the fact that 20 of the 80 respondents (25%) omitted television in the sequence described.

Interviews with randomly selected enrollees. Admittedly, the data presented heretofore is from a self-selecting--and therefore limited--population. Believing that data gathered randomly would provide an important addition to the data described above, it was decided to obtain responses to the course through a random interview procedure.

Following the careful development and pilot testing of an interview protocol, staff members at the four SUN learning centers conducted interviews with a random selection of Accounting I learners who had completed either the second

or third examination. Several questions asked in the interview were directly or indirectly related to learner responses to television in the course. Fifty-two interviews were completed, constituting nearly one-fifth of those originally enrolled for credit.

An initial series of questions related to the use of instructional aids provided with Accounting I. From the responses to these questions, the following two things relating to learner use of television are of note:

1. Sixteen of 52 respondents (31%) reported that sometime after the course began they stopped watching the television programs. Most of these gave scheduling problems as the reason. Five (10%) reported they stopped watching the television programs largely because the programs did not provide sufficient help.

2. Eight learners (15%) omitted television from their list when asked to indicate their recommended order of study with Accounting I instructional materials.

A second group of questions related directly to the learner's use and evaluation of the television component in the course. Summaries of the responses to these questions follow:

When asked how generally helpful, the television programs were in the course, the responses as categorized by the evaluator were as follows:

Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	Did Not Use
8%	63%	25%	4%

When asked to describe their overall feelings about the television programs, interviewees made negative responses approximately twice as often as positive ones. The prevalent criticisms closely paralled those obtained on the written evaluation forms: Too much entertainment and too little instruction, and the juvenile level of appeal.

A final question in this series asked the learner to indicate whether the television broadcast schedule had a significant effect in pacing the learner's progress through the course. The following characterizes the responses:

Yes, TV had a significant effect on pacing	No, TV did not affect pacing significantly	TV initially affected pacing, but not later on
27 (52%)	19 (36.5%)	6 (11.5%)

Interviews with non-completers. Up to this point, little or no data had been gathered from course non-completers. For this reason, it was decided that efforts should be made to contact those learners enrolled for credit who had not--as of April 30, 1975--completed any of the three course examinations. Arrangements were made for SUN to ask these non-completers several of the questions included on the general end-of-course evaluation form. The last of these questions is the only one of concern here; an open-ended question asking for specific recommendations the learner would make to improve the course.

Of 32 Accounting I learners who had not yet completed any course test by May 15th, 17 (53%) recommended explicitly or implicitly that the television be improved. When reasons were given, they paralled those provided by Accounting I learners on other evaluation instruments: The television was "silly," was too much like Sesame Street, or it did not present sufficient content.

Learner Responses to Television in Accounting I (second offering)

One problematical area revealed by learner responses on the various evaluation instruments during the first offering of Accounting I concerned the television component. It was thus decided that during the second offering a more detailed evaluation of the use of television in Accounting I would be undertaken.

The only data gathered and analyzed to date has been from learner returns of the first of three 'intermediate' evaluation forms sent out to all enrolled

learners during the course. These forms were to be returned at designated points in the course in supplied postage-free envelopes.

Intermediate evaluation forms. To date, 35 enrollees (28%) have returned the first Intermediate Evaluation Form covering the first six lessons (through Unit A). Due to this limited return, the discussion to follow must be treated with considerable caution.

The first item on this form having direct relevance to the present study asks the learner to rank the five instructional aids used in the course in order of their importance to the learner. Television was ranked fourth overall.

A second item asks several questions relating to the learner's utilization of the television component. The following summarizes the responses to these questions:

- Ten persons (29%) reported they had missed one or more of the television programs, but none indicated that such was due to dissatisfaction with the television. Virtually all programs missed were due to schedule problems.

- Seventeen persons (49%) reported they had seen one or more of the television programs twice. On the average, these learners saw half of the programs twice.

- When asked to rate the television programs as to their importance, enjoyment and helpfulness in pacing study, 74% considered the television as important, 80% reported they obtained some enjoyment, and 77% concluded that the programs helped them pace their study.

When asked to provide comments or suggestions regarding the television programs, 25 (71%) of the learners responded. The responses to this question as judged and categorized by the evaluator, parallel those made most frequently by first offering enrollees: The television should contain considerably

more instructional content, and the programs are too much like Sesame Street for adults with an excess of frivolous material.

Summary of Responses to Television in Accounting I (two offerings)

The data concerning learner responses to the television component of Accounting I can be summarized as follows:

1. Nearly 75% of enrollees find the television component of the course to be of some help to them in the study of the course and for about 20% the programs prove very helpful. Nearly 25% of the enrollees rate the television programs as being of little help in their study. About 5% report that they have not used the television component.

2. Enrollees who complete the course consider the television as having been one of the two least important instructional components for them in their study.

3. About a third of those who complete the course indicate that the television programs provided some enjoyment for them, while a slightly higher percentage say they received very little enjoyment from the programs.

4. Nearly 25% of those completing Accounting I perceive that the television programs were of considerable importance, while over a third say the television was of little importance.

5. When enrollees comment regarding the television, negative statements outnumber positive ones.

6. The two most prevalent criticisms of the television programs in Accounting I made by learners are: The programs do not present sufficient instructional content. The material is presented in such a fashion as to be offensive to serious adult learners.

7. As many as half of the enrollees who have maintained progress through the course say the broadcast of television programs had a significantly positive effect on their study pace.

The following are interpretations made by the evaluator of the data regarding learner responses to television in Accounting I:

- The majority of those enrolling find the television component of the course to be helpful in their study; of at least moderate importance to the course; and enjoyable to some extent.

- Up to a quarter of enrollees consider that the television programs provide little or no help to them in the course. For a third of the learners or more, the television programs are not enjoyed and are considered to be of little or no importance to the course. In response to open-ended requests for comments, negative comments about television generally exceed positive ones on the order of two to one.

- When asked to rank the five instructional components of Accounting I in terms of their importance to the course, enrollees in the course tend to rank the television component near the bottom. Only the newspaper component is generally ranked lower.

- Enrollees tend to object to some aspects of the general approach taken in the development and production of the television component. The approach to television used in Accounting I encounters difficulties with enrollees for two reasons: 1) the television programs are perceived by enrollees as oriented toward a juvenile rather than an adult audience, with an excess of 'silliness' and frivolous activities; and 2) there is, in the view of enrollees, insufficient instructional content in the programs.

Frequent comparison is made between the Accounting I television programs and the CTW Sesame Street series, and the comparisons are invariably couched

in negative terms. Many suggest that a more traditional college-level instructional approach be employed in Accounting I. These learners would seem to prefer a television component providing more straightforward cognitive input in a format perceived to be less condescending.

- The television component of Accounting I, in its broadcast mode, apparently serves an important pacing function with a relatively large number of learners.

2. Introductory Psychology

The role of television in Introductory Psychology

The television component in Introductory Psychology consists of a number of CRM and other films to which UMA-produced material has been added. The acquired films are generally documentary in nature, utilizing a variety of formats such as interviews; film footage of experiments, interviews or activities; and animation. Each film deals with one or more aspects of a particular topic relevant to an introductory course in psychology. Usually, a film provides material which elaborates on a topic from the text.

UMA developed supplementary television material to serve a variety of purposes, such as providing continuity within and between films. The team selected for the production of these materials by UMA was made up of local well-qualified professional personnel.

The television material produced by UMA for Introductory Psychology was, as in Accounting I, designed to appeal to the viewers. Repertory group members assumed various roles in studio-produced vignettes.

Typically, a television program begins with a UMA-produced segment introducing the lesson in a dramatized form. This format was intended to capture learner interest and provide an advance organizer for the topic. Additional

UMA-produced segments might occur elsewhere in the program. Some settings are realistic and others abstract. Although UMA material was intended to maintain learner interest, it was believed that learners would respond best to a more cognitive learning approach.

Learner Responses to Television in Introductory Psychology (first offering)

Unit evaluation forms. Introductory Psychology consists of 15 lessons with each lesson comprising a unit of instruction. First offering enrollees were asked to submit the same unit evaluation form as those enrolled in Accounting I. Each enrollee was to submit forms for six units according to an assigned pattern. A total of 454 forms were returned. An overall average of about 29% of the learners returned froms for the units assigned.

In terms of the only question asked on the unit evaluation form relating specifically to television, 30% rated the television "Very Helpful" and 47% indicated it was "Helpful." The television was "Not Helpful" for 13% while 9% reported not using it."

Over the 15 units, only 39 comments were made regarding television. Of these, 21 (54%) were positive in nature and 18 (46%) were negative.

End-of-course evaluation forms. The procedure followed with end-of-course evaluation forms in Introductory Psychology was the same as with Accounting I. As of May 31, 1975, 91 persons had completed the first offering of Introductory Psychology. Sixty-three of these (69%) had returned the end-of-course evaluation forms when the data were analyzed.

In response to the item asking enrollees to rank order course components, nearly a quarter of the respondents omitted television in their rankings. Among those who did include the television component, television was most often ranked

third, although the mean ranking was approximately fourth. The average respondent included five aids in the rankings.

The Introductory Psychology supplementary end-of-course form included two items relating directly to learner responses to television. Each of these items included two questions: one asking for a multiple-choice response followed by a related open-ended question.

In terms of the first item, nearly nine of ten enrollees found the television programs pleasurable, and less than 10% considered the pleasurable aspects of the programs as detracting from their information role. With respect to the second item, two-thirds of the enrollees found the television broadcast to be helpful in pacing their study schedules.

Interviews with non-completers. More than 50 Introductory Psychology learners who had not completed more than two exams were contacted late in May. Among other questions posed, these learners were asked what thing(s) contributed to their falling behind in the course. Of the responses made to this question, most dealt with personal schedule problems or illness and none were related to learners' reactions to the television component of the course.

Learner Responses to Television in Introductory Psychology (second offering)

Data gathered during the first offering of Introductory Psychology did not reveal any major problems in the television component of the course. There were, however, some indications of learner discontent with the television programs during the first offering, so additional data concerning learner responses to television are being collected during the second offering.

The only data collected and analyzed thus far has been in terms of responses made on a unit evaluation form devised for the second offering. The unit evaluation form for the present offering was to be submitted following each unit (lesson)

of the course. The first 75 enrollees received forms for all 15 units.

The unit evaluation form for the second offering asks several objective questions directly relating to television, with a request for comments following each question. In addition, a final open-ended question provides additional opportunity for learners to respond. The overall responses to the two of these questions most relevant to this report may be summarized as follows:

> 71% found the television both informative and pleasurable. Less than 10% in each case, found the television neither informative nor pleasurable, one but not the other, or made no response.
>
> 62% indicated that the television helped them to pace their study during the course; 34% said that the television did not serve as a pacer for their study.

Between 40 and 50 substantive comments about the television programs were made on the 119 unit evaluation forms submitted. Negative comments outnumbered positive ones by more than three to one. About a third of the negative comments related to learners' perception of the television as not covering unit print content (text and study guide) adequate.

Summary of Responses to Television in Introductory Psychology (two offerings)

The following observations summarize the data on learner responses to television in Introductory Psychology:

1. Generally, about 75% of those enrolled consider the television programs helpful to very helpful. Less than 15% perceive them to be of no help.

2. Up to 90% of enrollees rate the television programs as pleasurable. Less than 10% of those completing the course indicate that the pleasurable aspects of the television programs seriously detract from their informative value. Only about 5% of those enrolled find the television neither informative nor pleasurable.

3. Between 5% and 10% of enrollees do not, for a variety of reasons, watch the television programs.

4. About two-thirds of the enrollees perceive the television component to be a significant help to them in pacing their study in the course.

5. When enrollees are asked to rank the instructional components according to their importance, the television is ranked about fourth on the average.

6. Relatively few enrollees respond to open-ended requests for criticisms with comments about the television programs.

The preceding data provide grounds for the following conclusions about the television component of Introductory Psychology.

- Overall, the television component does not present significant difficulties for the great majority of enrollees.
- Enrollees tend to view the television programs as interesting to watch, enjoyable and helpful in a broad sense, but not particularly helpful in learning the specific content for which they are responsible. They consider two or three other course components as more important to them in their study for the course.
- The television broadcast is perceived by most enrollees as being an important to very important positive factor in the pacing of their study.

3. Consumer Experience

Description of the role of television in Consumer Experience

Consumer Experience is, like Introductory Psychology, a course acquired by UMA from another producer. Unlike the latter, however, Consumer Experience was offered virtually as acquired, including the use of the television component. This component differs markedly from the television components of

other UMA course offerings. It might best be classified as a "direct instruction" course component. The major portion of each television program consists of direct presentation of information by the two originators of the course.

Other formats are also used--interviews, documentary footage with voice-over, etc.--but direct instruction is generally the obvious function of the television programs. In short, the television component of Consumer Experience is relatively close to the cognitive end of the cognitive-affective spectrum. The television component for this course also differs from the use of television in other UMA courses in that the two talents used throughout as course "instructors" are--in fact--college professors rather than professional actors.

With respect to the instructional role of television in Consumer Experience, the television component for this course--in contrast to the other three UMA courses offered to date--carries a large portion of the instructional load for the course. The textbooks are supplementary to the content of the television program. The Student Learning Guide is little more than an outline of the television content, and the tests for the course were formulated largely from the material covered in the television programs.

Learner Responses to Television in Consumer Experience (first offering)

The Consumer Experience course is in the midst of its first offering and the only direct data now available that relates to learner responses to the television component of the course are drawn from intermediate evaluation forms. Enrollees have been asked to submit this form three times during the course at equal intervals. Each evaluation from covers ten lessons.

On the form there is one item asking learner reactions to the helpfulness of the television component. Responses to this item from the first and second intermediate evaluation forms received to date show that over 70% find the television very helpful and virtually all the rest consider it helpful.

To each intermediate evaluation form is appended an additional form entitled "Consumer Experience Television Program Evaluation Form." The purpose of this form is to obtain learner ratings of each television program immediately after the broadcast. The form lists all ten programs to be viewed during the evaluation period, the dates they are shown, a place to indicate if the program was not viewed, and a five-point rating scale from "Exceptional" to "Unacceptable."

On the first form an average of 75% of the respondents rated the programs as "Good" to "Exceptional." Almost no learners rated them below average and only an average of 5% reported not seeing the programs. About 85% of respondents returning the second form rated the programs highly and none rated them less than average.

Summary of Responses to Television in Consumer Experience (first offering)

Not much can be said at this time regarding learners' responses to the television component in Consumer Experience because of the limited data gathered thus far. It does appear, however, that thus far in the course enrollees are reasonably well satisfied with the television programs. Virtually all learners rate the television programs as "Helpful" to "Very Helpful" with over two-thirds rating them as "Very Helpful." On the ratings of individual programs, no program received more than one adverse rating. Ratings of "Exceptional" range up to 53% for one program with an average of over 25%.

From these data, the following tentative conclusions about the television component in Consumer Experience are offered.

- Overall, the television programs in Consumer Experience do not present any substantial problems for enrollees. Individually and collectively, the programs are perceived by the learners as helpful.

- The fact that the television component carries virtually all the instructional responsibility for the course does not seem in any way to create difficulties for the learners.

- On the average, about 80% of enrollees rate the individual television programs as good to exceptional.

- Learners have apparently not been dissatisfied with the use of consumer education professors instead of actor talents as authority figures in the programs.

- Learners do not thus far give evidence of being discontented with the general format of the programs.

4. Making It Count

The role of television in Making It Count

The fourth course offered by UMA--Making It Count--is also an acquired course that has been offered by UMA largely in the same form as acquired.

The television component for this course is the closest example among the UMA courses of "one to one" instruction (i.e., presenter to viewer). One person, a male professional broadcaster, is used throughout the series as the authority figure or presenter. He normally introduces the topic of the program and provides voice-over when other than face-on formats are used (film footage, animation, etc.). As with Consumer Experience, the television programs in Making It Count were produced with a heavy orientation toward cognitive instruction, although considerable effort was made to make the television programs enjoyable as well as instructional. Unlike the situation with the television programs in Consumer Experience, the content of the programs in this course is virtually a repeat of the Student Manual material.

Learner Responses to Television in Making It Count (first offering)

The first offering of Making It Count began simultaneously with the other three courses, but because of the relative brevity of the course, the television broadcast schedule concluded late in May. Again, however, the only data available regarding learner responses to the television component are from the intermediate evaluation forms returned by learners. This form, essentially the same as that used in Consumer Experience, was to be returned by all enrollees at three times during the course. To date, 34 enrollees (48%) have submitted the first form, 25 (35%) the second and 15 (21%) the third.

Responses to the item concerning the helpfulness of television in Making It Count may be summarized as follows with respect to all three forms. On the average, 47% found the television "Very Helpful," 44% rated them "Helpful," and 7% indicated that they were "Not Helpful." None reported that the television was not used, but 2% made no response.

When asked to describe briefly any strong feelings the learner had about any of the learning aids, 14 enrollees (18% of the total respondents) commented in terms of the television programs. These responses were equally divided between positive and negative comments. The positive comments were quite equally distributed between lauding the authority figure, expressing a liking for the format of the programs, and making general statements of praise for the television.

There was a greater focus underlying the negative comments. Some respondents were dissatisfied that the television programs seemed to be word-for-word repeat of the Student Manual. Several thought the television programs should address only the more important parts of the lesson and cover these in greater detail.

Summary of responses to television in Making It Count (first offering)

Any conclusion reached at this time with respect to the television program in Making It Count must be couched in very tentative terms. Still, some such tentative conclusions do seem warranted.

- The overwhelming majority of enrollees perceive the television programs to be helpful in their study for the course, and nearly half consider the programs to be very helpful in this respect.

- There is a tendency on the part of enrollees to deplore the fact that the television programs are simply a repetition of the print instructional material. These learners would prefer additional in-depth coverage of the more important parts of the lesson.

- There are some positive indicators and no evidence to the contrary that the overall format and style of presentation manifest in the Making It Count television programs are well received by the enrollees.

Conclusions, Implications for UMA, and Suggested Questions for Further Research

UMA is a young organization in terms of its own criteria for maturity. Eventually, UMA plans to have a diversified portfolio of 50 or more course offerings, but at present has only offered four courses. With respect to two of these courses, UMA has had no developmental role. Moreover, only two of the four courses have gone through a complete offering. It would be premature, therefore, to speak in definitive terms about conclusions to be drawn from course offering data obtained to date. This does not, however, negate the necessity for outlining some tentative conclusions based on data gathered.

Before outlining some tentative conclusions and their implications for UMA, a listing of some overall generalizations drawn from data on all courses offered to date is presented below:

- The television programs for courses offered to date are perceived as "Helpful" to "Very Helpful" by a large majority of enrolled learners. These ratings range from virtually all learners in Consumer Experience to approximately 70% of Accounting I learners.

- At least half of those learners completing a UMA course consider the television component of the course, in its broadcast mode, to have been an important positive factor in the pacing of their study for the course.

- Those who have completed UMA courses tend to perceive the television component of a course as having been of relatively less importance to them in their study than other components (principally print).

- With respect to the two courses with completed offerings, there is a tendency for those completing each of these courses to rate the television similarly in terms of its pleasure-invoking characteristics and its perceived importance.

- A course in which the role of television is perceived by learners as being largely that of presenting material clearly related to important objectives of the courses generally elicits indicators of learner satisfaction.

- There is a tendency for learners in UMA courses to react negatively to those aspects of the television programs perceived by learners as having largely an entertainment function rather than one of instruction.

- Optimal satisfaction for UMA course enrollees seems to occur when the television programs present important aspects of course content also presented in other components, but do so in a way distinctly different from other presentations.

The following are some tentative conclusions regarding the employment of television in UMA courses together with the implications for UMA drawn from these conclusions.

1. UMA courses are not perceived by learners as being "television courses" with adjunct components simply tacked on. Generally, television has not been considered by learners to be as important as the textbook or study guide.

Implication for UMA: UMA must maintain a clear perspective of the relative importance of the instructional role of television in its courses. UMA should not lose sight of the fact that television--in spite of such factors as cost--is but one of many media available for use in courses. This should encourage UMA to discern the optimal roles of television, and to pursue with vigor the policy of employing television and other media in terms of the roles each medium can best play.

2. Broadcast television, as a course component, plays a significant role in serving as an effective study pacer for a significantly large number of course enrollees.

Implication for UMA: Serious consideration must be given by UMA to the ongoing importance of the role played by broadcast television as a course-pacing component. If necessary, alternative means for the provision of sufficient broadcast television capabilities to meet expected future needs by UMA should be fully explored and appropriate action taken to ensure the meeting of those needs.

3. Enrollees in UMA academic courses, and particularly those seeking to obtain college level credit for their study efforts, exhibit a low tolerance for any television component material not perceived to be directly instructional. UMA enrollees to date seem to resent the employment of techniques perceived by them as principally devised to entertain learners.

Implication for UMA: The decision to reject the classroom lecture conceptualization of instructional television should be reviewed. It may be

advisable for UMA to accept the risk of erring on the side of providing too little of an enjoyment-inducing instructional environment and too much instructional content.

4. For learners enrolled in UMA courses offered to date, the elusive notion of "quality" is viewed differently than has been the case up to now within UMA. If "quality" refers to those characteristics of the television component which taken together lead to overall learner satisfaction with and motivation by the programs, then a discrepancy may well exist between the identification of the optimal characteristics of television by UMA and by learners.

Implication for UMA: UMA should address the issue of defining "quality" in course television components more fully than in the past. A major focus in this examination should be on the learner and the things that contribute significantly to learner satisfaction with and achievement in a UMA course.

5. Regarding the question as to what and how much course content to include in the television programs, two extremes need to be avoided. The content of the television programs should be integral with the content of other components and the television component itself ought to provide significant learning. At the same time, television content must not simply be a reiteration of what has been presented elsewhere in the course. Television does have a more or less unique role to play in the presentation of course content and will prove most useful when its unique qualities are brought to bear on the content at hand.

Implications for UMA: In the development of television components as well as in the selection of television components already produced, UMA should seek to avoid the two extremes described above. Television components for UMA courses should involve the presentation of a significant amount of content relevant to the principal objectives for the course, but the presentation should also take optimal advantage of the unique strengths of television.

The above data, generalizations and tentative conclusions suggest a number of research questions that should be addressed by UMA with respect to the use of television in courseware. Some of the more important of these are listed below together with a very tentative research hypothesis for each.

- Specifically, what degree of impact does the television broadcasting of programs have on the course completion statistics?

Hypothesis: Broadcasting the television programs for a UMA course serves a vital pacing role with learners and has a significant positive effect on course completion statistics.

- What characteristics of course television programs are most closely related to measures of learner satisfaction with the television component of a course and the course overall?

Hypothesis: Learner satisfaction with the television programs for a UMA course and to some lesser extent with the course overall will be most closely related to the characteristics of the television component pertaining directly to instruction and course content. To a much lesser degree, learner satisfaction with a course and with the television component of the course will be related to "instructional context" characteristics of the television programs (e.g., use of skilled actors, employment of a diversified array of video production techniques, etc.).

Summary

The television component of each of the four courses offered to date by UMA and SUN is, by design, an important instructional element of the course, albeit not one of exclusive importance. Generally, the course television components have thus far been considered by enrollees to be both helpful and

enjoyable, although there have been considerable variations in this regard across courses. The perceived helpfulness of the television programs, as well as their enjoyment, seems to depend on the degree to which the medium is used to present content clearly pertinent to the instructional objectives of the course. Independent of how the television programs are rated in terms of helpfulness or enjoyment, they apparently do serve as an effective course pacing device with most learners. A synthesis of the responses made by enrolled learners to the television components of the various UMA courses has a number of specific implications for UMA relating to its use of television in future courseware.